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## Attorney Ad Litem (AAL) Program Overview

### HISTORY

The Arkansas General Assembly established the Division of Dependency-Neglect (DN) Representation within the Administrative Office of the Courts in 1997 to implement and oversee a program to ensure that all children in dependency-neglect proceedings were provided representation. The Arkansas Supreme Court was charged with developing standards of practice and qualifications for service for all attorneys who seek employment or contracts to provide legal representation to children in dependency-neglect cases. In June of 1999, the Supreme Court issued a Per Curiam Order adopting prerequisite qualifications, standards of practice and caseload standards for Attorneys Ad Litem that became effective on January 1, 2000 and were revised per Arkansas Supreme Court Administrative Order No. 15 in September 2001.

Since implementation of the statewide AAL Program, qualified attorneys are appointed when the DN Petition is filed with the court to represent the best interest and ensure that the articulated wishes are made known to the court for every child in a dependency-neglect case. DN AALs must continue to participate in ongoing CLE and comply with the standards of practice adopted by the Program.

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